



WEST VALLEY CITY
Unity Pride Progress

NEWS RELEASE

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NIU WORLD: BEING POLYNESIAN IN AMERICA **Contemporary Art Exhibition at Utah Cultural Celebration Center**

WHAT: The Utah Cultural Celebration Center is proud to host Utah artists W. Ka'aumoana Varner, Richard Koloapeua & Lilo Tauvao and their newest exhibition: NIU WORLD: Being Polynesian In America.

WHEN: October 5 – November 14
Exhibit open Monday through Thursday, 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday by appointment.
Opening Reception: Friday, October 5, 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

WHERE: Utah Cultural Celebration Center, 1355 West 3100 South

WHO: EVERYONE is invited to this FREE exhibition!

WHY: "The coconut, or niu as it's known throughout Polynesia, is a notorious wanderer. Drifting from one island to the next, it makes its home wherever it lands. Likewise, Polynesian peoples have ridden the waves of necessity and ambition all over the world, many of them landing here in this big land of spacious skies and amber waves. They've learned the rules and the language and sunk roots deep into this soil.

So what about us today? Will the niu inspire us to venture out and forward as it did our parents and grandparents? Maybe it reminds us of the old ways where the coconut tree was the staff of life providing food, drink, shelter, clothing, transportation, guidance and more. Can the label of coconut as it's been applied to us in a derogatory way be redefined to strengthen us? Maybe the mention of niu just makes our mouths water.

Our individual experiences as Polynesian Americans have been both diverse and remarkably similar. Like the niu we have found some soil rocky and some that is warm and fertile. The rain that nourishes us here can also flood and overwhelm us. In the mix of it all we've worked to find a balance where old traditions meet modern trends, where stereotypes meet individuality and where the reliability of the old ways meets the uncertainty of an uncharted tomorrow.

This art represents our experiences, frustrations and hopes as Polynesian Americans who, whether born here or brought here at a young age, are taking root and thriving." – W. Kaaumoana Varner

For more information about this exhibit and other events or exhibits at the Utah Cultural Celebration Center at 965-5100, or visit www.culturalcelebration.org.

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